



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

6/24/19

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: Initial Message to the Department

It is the honor and privilege of a lifetime to serve alongside you as the Acting Secretary of Defense.

Since rejoining the Department nearly two years ago as the Secretary of the Army, my confidence in the incredible skill, professionalism, and commitment of our military and civilian workforce has grown even stronger.

As we continue to advance the Nation's security, let me reaffirm our path forward. The National Defense Strategy remains our guiding document and everything we do should support its stated objectives. The Department's priorities remain unchanged. We will continue to expand the competitive space through three mutually reinforcing lines of effort:

- *Build a More Lethal Force* – The surest way to deter adversary aggression is to fully prepare for war. We must continue to build readiness to fight tonight should the Nation call, while modernizing key capabilities for future conflict.
- *Strengthen Alliances and Attract New Partners* – Our Allies and Partners play an essential role in helping us deter conflict and defend freedom around the world. Through continued engagement we will grow these relationships and deepen our interoperability.
- *Reform the Department for Greater Performance and Affordability* – Reform is the means by which we free up time, money, and manpower to reinvest into our top priorities. Look for smarter, more effective ways to do business, and empower your teams to innovate and take prudent risk where necessary.

Having previously served in the Regular Army, National Guard, and Reserve, I understand well the sacrifices our Service Members, Civilians, and their Families make to protect this great country. This is why I am committed to taking care of Families and ensuring they have the resources they need to thrive.

Lastly, I place great importance on a commitment by all – especially Leaders – to those values and behaviors that represent the best of the military profession and mark the character and integrity of the Armed Forces that the American people admire.

I am proud of the great work our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians do each and every day around the world. Stay focused on your mission, remain steadfast in your pursuit of excellence, and always do the right thing. Together, we will remain the most ready and capable military force in the world, which is what our Nation expects and deserves.

Mark T. Esper
Acting



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